

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 7090

BILL NUMBER: HB 1151

NOTE PREPARED: Jan 4, 2004

BILL AMENDED:

SUBJECT: Absentee Ballots.

FIRST AUTHOR: Rep. Mahern

FIRST SPONSOR:

BILL STATUS: As Introduced

FUNDS AFFECTED: X **GENERAL**
DEDICATED
FEDERAL

IMPACT: State & Local

Summary of Legislation: The bill permits a voter who is qualified to vote in person to vote by absentee ballot by mail. The bill removes all other qualifications for a voter to vote by absentee ballot by mail except for a voter with disabilities who is unable to make a voting mark on the ballot or sign the absentee ballot secrecy envelope. (Such a disabled voter is currently required to vote before an absentee voter board.)

Effective Date: July 1, 2004.

Explanation of State Expenditures: *Summary:* Under the bill, more individuals may request an absentee ballot either through mail or by absentee voter board. The Indiana Election Division prints absentee ballots for certain counties using optical scan voting machines. If the quantity of absentee ballots demanded were to increase as a result of the bill, the Election Division could see an increase in ballot expenditures. For illustrative purposes only, if 10,000 additional absentee paper ballots were requested, the estimated cost would be about \$550.

Background: For the 2000 general election, the cost of paper ballots per 1,000 voters was about \$54.75. The cost of optical scan ballots was about \$300 per thousand.

The Election Division expended less than \$10,000 for paper ballots in 2002. The Division expended less than \$15,000 for paper ballot production in 2000. In 2000, the Division had printed about 107,000 official presidential ballots, 29,900 sample presidential ballots, 88,950 official statewide office ballots, and about 16,000 sample statewide ballots.

Explanation of State Revenues:

Explanation of Local Expenditures: *Summary:* The provisions of the bill would have an indeterminable impact on local expenditures. More absentee ballots may need to be printed if demand increases. The county election board may also have additional postage expenses for any increase in absentee ballots mailed as a result of the bill.

If additional voters were to choose to vote by mail-in absentee ballot under the provisions of the bill, local election officials could experience an increase in administrative time to tabulate the additional absentee ballots.

Additionally, local expenditures could be affected by the potential increased need for county absentee voter boards. Under current law (IC 3-11-10-26.3) county election boards may adopt a resolution to establish a satellite facility within the county where voters may cast absentee ballots before an absentee voter board.

Absentee Voter Boards: Under current law, absentee voter boards are comprised of two members, one of each major political party. The board members must be voters in the county of service and are appointed to their position by the county election board. Absentee voter board members are entitled to a per diem set by the county executive for performance of their duties. Additionally, members of boards who travel to an individual's place of confinement to allow the individual to vote are allowed a per diem determined by the county executive and travel mileage reimbursement rate determined by the county fiscal body.

Explanation of Local Revenues:

State Agencies Affected: Indiana Election Division.

Local Agencies Affected: Counties.

Information Sources: Indiana Election Division, (317) 232-3939; Election Systems and Software (317) 913-0230.

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